

Remarks

Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Drawing Objection

The drawings are objected to for the reason set forth in the Official Action.

In response, a Request for Approval to Amend the Drawings and Submission of Corrected Sheet of Formal Drawings is being filed concurrently herewith in which Figure 12 is labeled --PRIOR ART--. No new matter has been added. It is respectfully submitted that the objection to the drawings has been overcome.

Claim Status

Claims 1, 3, and 5 through 20 are now pending in the present application, with Claims 1, 10 and 16 being independent.

Claim 2 and 4 have been canceled. Claims 1, 6, and 7 have been amended to even more succinctly define the invention and/or to improve their form. Claims 10 through 20 are newly-presented to accord Applicants an additional scope of protection commensurate with the disclosure. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

Allowable Subject Matter

It is acknowledged with appreciation that dependent Claim 7 is indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Section 112 Rejection

Claims 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for the reasons set forth in the Official Action. In response, the claims have been amended *inter alia* to adopt the language kindly suggested by the Examiner.

Section 102 Rejection

Claims 1 through 6, 8, and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being anticipated by Isobe, et al. The rationale underlying the rejection is succinctly set forth in the Official Action.

Traversal of Section 102 Rejection

The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Amended Claim 1 calls for a developing device that includes a developer bearing member and a developer container for containing a developer. The developer container includes a developer containing portion. A partition member divides an interior of the developer containing portion into a plurality of rooms. A cover for covering the developer containing portion. The partition member is molded integrally with the cover. The partition member is disposed in parallel with a longitudinal direction of the developer bearing member and extends to form a gap between the partition member and a bottom surface of the developer containing portion throughout an entire length of the developer containing portion in a longitudinal direction of the developer bearing member.

It is respectfully submitted that Isobe, et al. does not disclose a developing device including the features of the partition member recited in amended Claim 1.

The Examiner asserts that Isobe, et al. discloses an image forming apparatus including a partition member 44A molded to a top frame (cover), presumably lid 21BD, of

a toner containing portion. However, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's assertion is not correct. Partition wall 44A is not molded integrally with lid 21BD. Rather, the partition wall 44A and the lid 21BD are separate components. The Examiner may be misconstruing the description of the lid 21BD as being bonded to mean the lid is bonded to the partition member. See column 12, lines 36 through 54 of Isobe, et al. for a description of these separate components wherein Figure 7 of Isobe, et al. clearly show these components as being separate.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims are also allowable over the other cited art.

For example, Japanese Patent Document No. 60-229071 A (Tomimori, et al.) discloses that a partition member 60 comprises a plurality of partition plates 60a, which are provided integrally with a lid 59 at predetermined intervals on the lower surface of the lid 59. However, the partition plates 60a are not parallel with a developer bearing member. Rather, the partition plates 60a are perpendicular to the developer bearing member. It is respectfully submitted that Tomimori, et al. does not disclose the claimed feature that "said partition member is disposed parallel with a longitudinal direction of said developer bearing member."

In addition, Japanese Patent Document No. 11-219025 A (Matsuzaka, et al.) discloses a partition member 61 formed integrally with a housing 71 and partitions boards 73 formed integrally with a cover 72. The partition members 61 and 73 are parallel with a developer bearing member 41. As shown in Figure 4, the partition member 61 completely isolates an agitation chamber 64 from a supply chamber 65 in the longitudinal direction of the developer containing portion. See also Figure 3. The partition members 73 are

disposed at the opposite sides of the partition member 61. As shown in Figure 5, gaps are present between the partition member 73 and the housing 71. It is respectfully submitted that Matsuzaka, et al. does not disclose the claimed feature that “said partition member is extended to make a gap between said partition member and a bottom surface of said developer containing portion in the longitudinal direction of said developer bearing member.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that Isobe, et al. does not anticipate amended Claim 1.

Claim 10 has been formulated on the basis of original Claims 1, 6, and 7. It is believed that Claim 10 is allowable for including the allowable subject matter of original, dependent Claim 7.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 10, and 16 are allowable over the cited art whether taken individual or in combination.

Similar to Claim 1, independent Claim 16 recites the feature of the partition member. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 16 also is allowable.

Dependent Claims

Claims 3, 6 through 9, 11 through 15, and 17 through 20 depend either directly or indirectly from one of Claims 1, 10, and 16 and are allowable by virtue of their dependency and in their own right for further defining Applicants’ invention. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicants believe the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Office Action and submit that the present application is in allowable form. Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the application are earnestly solicited.

If there is any reason precluding the allowance of the application, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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